

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Sheriff - Coroner	(2) MEETING DATE 3/6/2012	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Ian Parkinson 781-4540	
(4) SUBJECT Request to add staff and equipment totaling \$546,715 to expand services provided by the Sheriff, County Fire, and Planning & Building's Code Enforcement Unit necessary to mitigate the public services impact created by the two large solar projects underway near California Valley.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION 1. Add 4.00 FTE limited-term Sheriff's Deputy positions to the Position Allocation List (PAL) in Fund Center (FC) 136 – Sheriff-Coroner; 2. Approve the purchase of two Sheriff's patrol vehicles and associated equipment, and amend the Sheriff's fixed asset list accordingly; 3. Approve an associated adjustment to the FY 2011-12 budget to add \$246,992 of expenditure appropriation to FC 136 – Sheriff-Coroner; 4. Add a 0.50 FTE limited-term Resource Protection Specialist I/II position to the PAL in FC 142 – Planning and Building Department; 5. Approve an associated budget adjustment of \$15,790 to add expenditure appropriation to FC 142 – Planning and Building Department; and 6. Add \$262,782 of revenue to FC 101 to offset expenses associated with expanding services provided by Sheriff, County Fire and Planning and Building. Items 2, 3, 5 and 6 require a four-fifths (4/5) vote of the Board of Supervisors			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) Sales Tax Revenue	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$546,715.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$1,291,771.00	(9) BUDGETED? No
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation (Time Est. _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		(12) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: 1112088 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4/5th's Vote Required <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(13) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(14) W-9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
(15) LOCATION MAP  N/A	(16) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT?  No	(17) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A Date _____	
(18) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW      Geoff O'Quest			
(19) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts -			

# County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Sheriff - Coroner / Ian Parkinson 781-4540

DATE: 3/6/2012

SUBJECT: Request to add staff and equipment totaling \$546,715 to expand services provided by the Sheriff, County Fire, and Planning & Building's Code Enforcement Unit necessary to mitigate the public services impact created by the two large solar projects underway near California Valley.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Add 4.00 FTE limited-term Sheriff's Deputy positions to the Position Allocation List (PAL) in Fund Center (FC) 136 – Sheriff-Coroner;
2. Approve the purchase of two Sheriff's patrol vehicles and associated equipment, and amend the Sheriff's fixed asset list accordingly;
3. Approve an associated adjustment to the FY 2011-12 budget to add \$246,992 of expenditure appropriation to FC 136 – Sheriff-Coroner;
4. Add a 0.50 FTE limited-term Resource Protection Specialist I/II position to the PAL in FC 142 – Planning and Building Department;
5. Approve an associated budget adjustment of \$15,790 to add expenditure appropriation to FC 142 – Planning and Building Department; and
6. Add \$262,782 of revenue to FC 101 to offset expenses associated with expanding services provided by Sheriff, County Fire and Planning and Building.

Items 2, 3, 5 and 6 require a four-fifths (4/5) vote of the Board of Supervisors

## **DISCUSSION**

This staff report requests the Board's approval for staffing increases and associated budget changes to mitigate the impact to public services as a result of the two utility scale solar projects underway near California Valley since last Fall. The first project is the California Valley Solar Ranch being constructed by SunPower. The second project is the Topaz Solar Farm, which is being constructed by First Solar.

These impacts were anticipated as part of the approval process for these two projects and the need to increase the services provided by the Sheriff, County Fire and Planning & Building's Code Enforcement Unit was identified in the Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) prepared for both projects.

The total cost of the resources requested by the Sheriff, County Fire and Code Enforcement Unit is \$546,715. This staff report requests that \$262,782 of this total be added as budget adjustments for the Sheriff and Code Enforcement. No budget adjustment is needed for County Fire due to existing expenditure savings. Total annualized expenditures beginning in FY 2012-13 are expected to be approximately \$1.3 million.

This request will result in increased staffing in the current fiscal year, and will continue for the duration of the construction period, which is estimated to last approximately three years. The cost of the additional resources requested by these three departments will be offset by the sales tax revenue the County will receive as a direct result of the two solar projects while they are under construction. A total of \$22.5 million is projected to be received over the next three years.

**Background:**

This section provides additional information on the public services impacts that will be addressed by each of the three requesting departments and the resources requested by each.

**Law Enforcement – Sheriff's Office**

The responsibility for law enforcement in the vicinity of California Valley and the two solar projects falls primarily to the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Other law enforcement agencies with some level of activity include the Department of Fish and Game and the Bureau of Land Management.

The Sheriff's Office has primary responsibility for the majority of crimes that occur within this area. CHP is responsible for traffic-related crimes and vehicle accident investigation. If CHP is the closest agency available they will also respond in a mutual aid capacity for crimes in progress. Sheriff's Deputies may be called to any kind of incident, if requested, and as appropriate will turn the investigation over to the responsible agency. Examples of this would include calls related to traffic, wildlife, and potential county planning code violations.

The SunPower project began in September of 2011, and is expected to reach a maximum sustained staffing level of 225 workers. The First Solar project began construction in November of 2011 and is expected to reach a maximum sustained staffing level of 500 workers. Calls for service, with current staffing, have delayed response times and even in an emergency, the closest law enforcement may be as much as an hour away. It is imperative that as the temporary population reaches the maximum sustained levels, staffing be increased to provide the necessary response to all calls for service.

Now that construction for the two projects is underway, the Sheriff's Office has begun to see the impact of the population increase in the California Valley area.

**Calls for Service (CFS) and Crimes Committed, California Valley and Vicinity**

	2010-11		2011-12		Increase	
Month	CFS	Crimes	CFS	Crimes	CFS	Crimes
September	8	2	22	10	175%	400%
October	6	3	12	4	100%	33.33%
November	4	3	13	3	225%	0%
December	5	3	17	3	240%	0%
January	15	2	15	2	0%	0%

As the table above shows, since the end of September there has already been an increase in the number of calls for service and the number of crimes reported. If this early data is indicative of the future activity level as the workforce increases to the projected sustained population of 700+, calls for service will be significantly higher than existing staffing levels can handle within reasonable response times.

Current staffing limits the opportunity for proactive patrol. Patrol is a visual deterrent to crime that, although it cannot be measured directly, has a positive effect on the crime rate. With the work force dedicated to these projects, proactive patrol will greatly reduce the perception that the community is in a remote area and social behavior will be more in line with what is observed in the communities the population has come from.

Some local residents are already promoting their property for RV parking for project employees. It is anticipated that some of the population will quickly identify vacant land with absentee owners and become squatters on those lots. While this is primarily a Code Enforcement issue, the Sheriff's Office will be the first called in many cases and will respond accordingly. The 50 space temporary worker housing encampment for the SunPower project has the potential to increase calls for service during non-working hours.

The North Station historically has had between 19 and 21 deputies assigned and is currently at 19 due to budget cuts in

past years. All patrol stations are currently operating at a level that allows for minimum coverage and still be able to handle the current level of calls for service. Consequently there are no other areas within the Sheriff's Office from which to transfer deputies that will not create significant staffing shortages in other areas.

The Sheriff's Office is requesting the addition of 4.00 FTE and two patrol vehicles. The Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) completed for the two solar projects indicated a staffing increase of 3.2 FTE and 1.5 vehicles. This increase in requested resources is due to an increase in the combined scope of the two projects. The EIR estimated assumed construction occurring 8 hours per day and only 5 days per week, with a total of 300 in the labor force for the duration of both solar projects. Since construction started last fall, the reported construction plan from both projects includes a total labor force of 700 workers, 6 days per week for 10 to 12 hours per day. Additionally, the 50 space transient work force trailer park for the SunPower project was not included in the EIR, which may increase the need for Sheriff's Office response.

An additional patrol beat ("Beat 8") will be created to cover the project area community and reasonable contiguous unincorporated areas of the county. In creating this new patrol beat, several factors will be used to determine the boundaries, including population, travel distance, geographic and topographic limitations, and the expected level of service.

A resident Sheriff's Deputy will be assigned to Beat 8. The concept of a resident deputy is not new to the Sheriff's Office. The current resident deputy in Cambria is available for call out during most of his non-working hours. This is an assignment where the Deputy is authorized a take-home marked vehicle and in turn, when home during non-working hours, is willing to be called out for response. There is no guarantee that the deputy will always be available, however our experience with the Cambria assignment is the deputy is available more times than not and greatly reduces response times to emergency calls.

Though there will be some lag time in hiring new deputies, once they begin the Field Training Officer (FTO) program, staffing will be available to fill this position in March or April of 2012. Preliminary inquiries with patrol staff indicate there is a desire and availability of personnel who can fulfill the Beat 8 resident deputy position. As additional deputies are hired to fill the approved staffing plan, they will begin the FTO program which occurs in 2-man beat cars. This will allow the deputy who was previously assigned with the trainer to be re-assigned to patrol duty in Beat 8. Once the new deputies have completed the FTO program, there will be more flexibility in assigning personnel to meet the needs of the community.

#### **Code Enforcement – Planning & Building Department**

Since project construction began, the Department of Planning and Building has seen a 20% increase in the number of Code Enforcement cases in the California Valley area. Consequently, it has been necessary to be in the field in the California Valley area more often than it was prior to the beginning of construction on the solar projects. In order to assure that adequate code enforcement activities are able to be provided, the EIR completed for the two solar projects indicated that a 0.50 FTE limited term Resource Protection Specialist I/II position should be added to the PAL for the Planning and Building Department for the duration of construction.

#### **Fire Protection and Life Safety – County Fire**

The California Valley Fire Station (Station 42) has historically been staffed by full-time firefighters three days per week, with emergency response provided on the other four days by Paid Call Firefighters. The EIR completed for the two solar projects indicated that staffing should be increased to full time, seven days a week during construction. This increase in staffing requires the addition of four staff positions to the two already assigned to this station. County Fire services are provided by CalFire under an annual service contract with the County, so County Fire positions are not allocated on the County's Position Allocation List (PAL).

#### **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT**

The Planning and Building Department, County Fire, and the Auditor's Office contributed to this staff report.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

If the Board adopts the recommended action, 4.50 FTE of limited-term staffing will be added to the County Position Allocation List (PAL), and a total of \$262,782 of expense appropriation will be added to the budget for the Sheriff's Office and the Department of Planning & Building Code Enforcement Unit. Another \$283,933 is estimated to be expended by County Fire to provide full-time staffing at the California Valley Fire Station (Station 42). No budget adjustment is needed for County Fire because there is sufficient expenditure savings in the department's adopted budget to accommodate this increase.

### **Expense - Current Year:**

	<b>FY 2011-12</b>
<b>Sheriff</b>	\$246,992
<b>Planning &amp; Building</b>	15,790
Budget Adjustment:	262,782
<b>County Fire</b>	283,933
Total:	\$546,715

### **Expense - Annualized:**

	<b>FY 2012-13</b>
<b>Sheriff</b>	\$593,656
<b>Planning &amp; Building</b>	63,158
<b>County Fire</b>	634,957
Total:	\$1,291,771

The cost of the additional resources requested by these three departments will be offset by the sales tax revenue the County will receive as a direct result of the two solar projects while they are under construction. The County estimates a total of \$22.5 million of sales tax will be received over the next three to five years related to these two projects.

The Sheriff's Office is requesting the addition of 4.00 FTE of limited-term Sheriff's Deputy positions, plus associated equipment, and two patrol vehicles. Total expense is expected to be approximately \$246,992 for the remainder of the current fiscal year (April through June). The annualized cost, beginning in FY 2012-13, is projected to be \$593,656.

#### **Sheriff Current Year Expenses:**

<b>Cost Item</b>	<b>FY 2011-12</b>
Staffing (including overtime)	\$128,792
Services & Supplies	16,300
Patrol Vehicle Purchases (2)	87,400
Vehicle Op & Maintenance	14,500
Total	\$246,992

The Planning & Building Department is requesting the addition of a 0.50 FTE limited term Resource Protection Specialist I/II position in its Code Enforcement Unit. The FY 2011-12 cost is estimated to be \$15,790. The annualized cost, beginning in FY 2012-13, is projected to be \$63,158.

#### **Code Enforcement Current Year Expenses:**

<b>Cost Item</b>	<b>FY 2011-12</b>
Staffing	\$13,660
Services & Supplies	90
Vehicle Op & Maintenance	2,040
Total	\$15,790

As of January 2, 2012, County Fire increased its full-time staffing at the California Valley Station (Station 42) from three days a week to seven days a week, with the approval of the County Administrative Officer (CAO). This increase in staffing required the addition of four staff positions: a fire captain and three firefighters. County Fire services are provided through a contract with Cal Fire, so County Fire positions do not appear on the County Position Allocation List (PAL). The FY 2011-12 cost is estimated to be \$283,933. The annualized cost, beginning in FY 2012-13, is projected to be \$634,957.

**County Fire Current Year Expenses:**

Cost Item	FY 2011-12
Staffing	\$281,818
Services & Supplies	2,115
Total	\$283,933

The addition will increase expenditures for County Fire staffing of the California Valley Station by \$283,933. However, a budget adjustment is not needed because there is sufficient expenditure savings available in the County Fire budget to offset this increase. This savings was generated when, early last year, the State reduced the benefit rates charged to the County for Cal Fire employees after the FY 2011-12 County budget was adopted. As a result, County Fire was able to begin its expanded coverage at the California Valley Station on January 2, 2012.

**RESULTS**

Approval of this request will provide staffing increases and associated budget changes necessary to mitigate the impact to public services from the two solar projects currently underway near California Valley. The impacts from these projects were anticipated as part of the approval process for the project. To mitigate these impacts, the Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) prepared for both projects identified the need to increase the services provided by the Sheriff, County Fire and Planning & Building's Code Enforcement Unit. Approval of this request will provide these three departments with the ability to meet the increasing service demands which are related to the increased population and construction, thus meet the County's goal of a safe, health, and livable community.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. PAL Change Resolution FC 136 & 142 (Sheriff & Planning LTs) 03-06-12